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TIRUPPATTUR, SIVAGANGAI (DT), TAMILNADU.



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**Retracing the Narrative of
Subalternity: Historical
Evolutions and New
Applications.
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Retracing the Narrative of Subalternity: Historical Evolutions and New Applications

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An appreciation on the Chronology of Indian writing in English

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Abstract:

Indian Writing in English has a short history but the seed of English Writing is charged one. The first book by an Indian in English was, “The Travels of Dean Mahomed” by Sake Dean Mahomed in 1793. Most of the early Indian writing in English was based on Biographies, Political based essays, non-fictional works. Most of the works till 1800 were written in the mother tongue of the authors and from 1900 onwards when Rabindranath Tagore started translating his work form Bengali to English, the resurgence of writing in English in India started. Sooner, many Indian new generation authors started writing in English, mainly contemporary based writings. The Indian authors also incorporated the thought of Indianness into their writings which paved the way for magnificent increase in Indian English literature readers.

In this paper we shall see about the appreciation on the Chronology of Indian English in Writing.

Keywords: Indian Writing, Sake Dean Mahomed, Non fictional, English

Introduction:

The beginning of the Indian Writing in English started during the regime of the Britishers rule in the country. At present the seed of the Indian Writing in English has grown bigger than a Banian Tree and an Ever-green Forest which its fragrance throughout the Country. It is possible only because of the untiring constant efforts of irreplaceable authors like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao and also in the recent times by many a number of writers who are getting awards and due recognition all over the Globe including the Western Countries which is famous for writing in English.

English is not an alien language to the Indian writers, it is in fact the language of our intellectuals like Sanskrit which was before – but not of our emotional make-up. Indians are all instinctively bilingual, many of us can write in our own mother tongue language and also in English though we cannot write English like the English people do. Indian Writing has turned out to be a new form of Indian culture and voice in which India converses regularly. Indian Writers – poets, novelists, essayists, and dramatists have been making momentous and considerable contributions to world literature since pre – Independence era, the past few years have witnessed a gigantic prospering and thriving of Indian English Writing in the global market.

Chronological Appreciation on Indian Writing in English:

Indian literature writing in English is two hundred years old. Sri Aurobindo stands like a huge oak spreading its branches over these two centuries. The contribution of Sri Aurobindo as a perfect writer and craftsman is undoubtedly great. He is the first poet in Indian English writing who has given the re – interpretation of myths. Sri Aurobindo envisages spiritual humanism. What Sri Aurobindo points out to the philosophers of today is that human life, body and mind are the evolved forms of super mind.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) is a celebrated name in the sphere of Indian English literature. His creative genius is so much accounting and his literary output is so much rich and varied that the phrase ‘myriad – minded’, which Mathew Arnold had used for Shakespeare, can aptly be used for him also. He won Nobel Prize for literature in 1913, for his immortal poetic work *Gitanjali*(1913). Besides being a great universal poet, Tagore is also a novelist, dramatist, Short – Story writer, musician, philosopher, painter, educationalist, reformer and critic in every field. Tagore has written thirteen novels of which nine are translated into English. The translated works are *Gora*, *The Home and The World* (1910), *The Wreck* (1921), *Binodini* (1964) and many more.

K.S.Venkataramani (1892-1952) is an Indo – Anglian writer. He is a novelist and Short – Story writer. He interweaves the centrality of the novel keeping in view the Gandhian ideology of a self – sufficient, morally and economically integrated village community as the elemental unit of the superstructure of the Indian society. He wrote two novels *Murugan*, *The Tiller* (1927), *Kandan*, *The Patriot* (1934).

Bhabani Bhattacharya (1906-1988) is one of the novelists of the older generation of Indo – Anglian writers. He is endowed with a transparently positive vision of life, explored and expressed artistically in his novels. He throws that the novel must have a social purpose, his stories abound in social and historical realities, quite often bitter and gruesome, such as the Bengal Famine of 1943, the tragedies of freedom struggle and partition, and the evils of poverty, corruption, ignorance, superstition, exploitation, greed etc.

The Indian English fiction has had a meteoritic growth during the dawn of the millennium year and the writing in all genres of literature has gained momentum, particularly the Indian novel, the doyens of the Indian writing like R.K.Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, and their ilk promoted the conventional mode of writing. The crusaders of the contemporary and modern era include Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth and many more. They elucidate and substantiate strength of the emerging modern voice of India, which has the vibrancy and energy of a gushing artesian along with an unmatched resolve to experiment and explore new avenues of writing novels. A host of contemporary post – colonial writers like Rushdie, Arundati Roy, Meena Alexander, Anita Nair and Jhumpa Lahiri have initiated the process of decolonizing the ‘Colonial English’ and using it as a medium to express Indian thoughts and sensibilities with a distinctive Indian style.

Mulk Raj Anand’s (1905 – 2004) novels brings to the limelight the inequalities of society and trials and tribulations of the less fortunate. *Untouchable*(1935), *Coolie*(1936), *The Village*(1939), and *The Private Life of an Indian Prince*(1953) addresses the evils existing in the society in the Marxist terms.

R.K.Narayan (1906-2001) is another celebrity author who enjoys a unique position in the crowded literary scene of Indian Fiction. He is undoubtedly the master of portraying the socio-comic aspects of the ordinary Indian's family and idiosyncrasies of human which form the crux of his novels. The greatest merit of his language and style lies in its simplicity. His subtle use of ironic humor explores the oddities of human nature and juxtaposing it with a dose of harmless humor. His fiction revolves around the imaginary sleepy South Indian town of Malgudi but expresses an outlook which has universal appeal. His famous novels are *The Bachelor of Arts* and *The Painter of Signs* (1933), *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The English Teacher* (1945), *Waiting for Mahatma* (1955), *The Guide* (1958), *The Sweet Vendor* (1967).

Raja Rao's (1908-2006) reputation as a novelist of metaphysics and philosophy is amply justified by his substantial contribution in upholding these themes in his novels. Women in Raja Rao's novels suffer from domestic injustice and tyrannical tradition, but the writer suggests no way out of their dilemma. His women characters, who are a little ambitious, end up playing the devoted role of a wife like Savitri in *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960). Indian culture being rooted into his consciousness fails him to offer any concrete solution to the besetting women's issue. He analyses modern India from a different perspective and elevates Hindu orthodoxy to a grand metaphysic. His work *The Serpent and the Rope*.

Salman Rushdie (1947) was born and brought up in Bombay. He had his Higher Education in England. Therefore, his basic Indian Knowledge and his education in England has played a stupendous role in shaping his mind. His novels are rounded with myths, symbols and motifs. His best novel is *Midnight Children* (1981) The language, style and narrative technique employed by him is highly innovative. Incredible imagination, amazing comic sense and absolute word – play are the hallmarks of Rushdie's works. His works abound with the lavish use of symbols and fantasy. Rushdie will always be remembered for his dare devil techniques, narrative spanning generations, depiction of characters with eccentricities, experimentation with style, abundant usage of allegory, symbols and thinly veiled disguise of real-life people.

Women novelists have also played a crucial and thumping role in enhancing the quality and quantity of the Indian writing in English. They also added the woman's perspective and feministic dimensions to their novels. These rich contributions have widened the spectrum of issues deliberated in the novel. In the past, the work by the Indian women authors has always been undervalued because of some patriarchal assumptions. Indian societies gave priorities to the work of male experiences. In those days, women used to write about a women's perception and experiences within the enclosed domestic arena. On the other hand, male authors used to deal with heavy themes. Thus, it was assumed that their work would get more priority and acceptance in the society. During the eighteenth century, these factors led towards the decline of Indian women writing. And with all these factors, production of women's literature declined further. In the nineteenth century, more and more women actively participated in India's reformist movement against the British rule. It again led to the women's literature. At that time, their write – ups mainly concentrated on the country's freedom struggle. Over the years, the world of feminist ideologies began to influence the English literature of India.

Among the women writers **Sarojini Naidu**, the great poetess charmed the readers with her writings. Feminism themes have also been used by authors like Nayantara Sahgal and Rama Mehta. Regional fiction theme has been aptly used by Kamala Das, Anita Nair and Susan Viswanathan. Novelists like Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai captured the spirit of Indian cultures and its traditional values. During 1990's India became a popular literary nation as a number of women authors made their debut in this era. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Suniti Namjoshi and Anuradha Marwah Roy used realism as main theme of their novels. The novels of authors like Namita Gokhale or Shobha De are really out – spoken. Most of these female novelists are known for their bold views that are reflected in their novels. In the twentieth century, women's writing was considered as a powerful medium of modernism and feminist statements. Today is the generation of those women writers who have money and are mostly western education. Their novels consist of the latest burning issues related with women as well as those issues that exist in the society since long.

Women writers in India are moving forward with their strong and sure strides, matching the pace of the world. We see them bursting out in full bloom spreading their own individual fragrances. They are recognized for their originality, versatility and the indigenous flavor of the soil that they bring to their work. Indian women writers like **Kamala Markandaya, Bharathi Mukherjee, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal** and many more have played a pioneering role in conveying the readers a wild range of indigenous Indian issues, punctuated by a strong feministic outlook. It is amazing to note that these writers have climbed the ladder of success in a slow and painful way. Thus, this new voice of emerging modern India succeeded in drawing the attention of the public towards the pressing problems of gender inequality, social evils, and encroachment of land by foreign nationals and exploitation of women in a patriarchal society.

Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004) was brought up in South India, but her works do not confine to provincial characters and themes. Kamala's oeuvre explores a multitude of issues and the choices of themes exhibit her potential to approach the subject with appreciable maturity and good organisation. is one of the first generation women novelists in Indian fiction in English. Her writing career spans almost four decades from the 1950s to the 1980s. She is neither a committed writer nor a propagandist. She presents India and social realities in her novels. She can be called a social realist. Her major concern is the picture of human suffering and endurance. She has authored ten novels. Her first novel is *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954).

Markandaya presents the plight and fight of the oppressed women in rural India. She delves deep into the feminine sensibility and psyche of a woman. In literary studies, and especially in stylistics, form and structure are an integral part of the study in modern fiction. Equally, the method adopted by a writer to present life in the process of living may be described as the narrative technique. Though the novel gets its main sustenance from the story it intends to tell, its success depends on how it is narrated.

Her works are a realistic delineation of the double pulls that the Indian women is subjected to, between her desire to assert herself as an individual and her duty in the capacity of a daughter, wife and mother. *Some Inner Fury* (1955) and *Possession* (1963) and *The Golden Honey Comb* (1977) are her popular novels, wherein she gives a clear and economical account of the life style of the peasants, the middle classes and the aristocracy and also focuses on the conflicting East – West relations. Kamala's ability to depict her social observations comes to the force in *A Handful of Rice* (1966). In *Pleasure City* (1982), Kamala concentrates on the intrusion of modernity in a traditional world and its consequences.

Conclusion:

Mulk Raj Anand (1905-), R.K.Narayan (1906-2000) and Raja Rao (1909-) are the trinity of Indian writing in English. They paved the way for other Indian writers to write in English. The sudden spirit of creative writing in the eighties reflects the sense of awareness of the plurality of the nation. Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh and Upamanya Chatterjee are the writers who reigned supremacy with their illustrious work in English Writing. Their works galloped over all the hurdles faced by newly independence nation, which at times a harsh depiction of reality. These writers have made brave attempts to recapture the altered perceptions of Post-Colonial India and the use of their revolutionary narrative technique that has elevated their position among the writers of Indian English writing.

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